



REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

GRANT PERIOD: 2017–2022

TEAM DECISION MAKING ENHANCEMENT FOR STRONG NATIVE FAMILIES

LEAD AGENCY: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.

TARGET SERVICE AREA: Anchorage, Alaska

LOCATION: Anchorage, Alaska

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES REGION: Region 10

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT SERVED: AK-01

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC), is a tribal organization with child welfare and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs operating in Anchorage, Alaska. For the RPG, CITC is implementing Team Decision Making Enhancements for Strong Native Families (TESNF) a regional interagency collaboration to provide coordinated services to increase well-being, improve permanency, and enhance the safety of Alaska Native children in Anchorage, Alaska, who are in, or at risk of, out-of-home placement in state custody due to a parent or caregiver's substance use. CITC has worked intensively with the State Office of Children's Services (OCS) to identify service gaps for OCS-engaged Alaska Native and American Indian children and youth whose families experience substance abuse.

The planning efforts determined that significant unmet needs exist in the intersections of substance abuse, child welfare, and Anchorage's Native community, such as:

- Meaningful family engagement in the Team Decision Making (TDM) process
- Immediate, relevant service linkage with supportive follow-up for families, following TDM processes
- SUD treatment that includes family support elements specifically designed for parents who are engaged with OCS
- Trauma-informed, culturally informed parenting skills development opportunities

Team Decision Making Enhancements for Strong Native Families enhances Alaska's TDM process through the addition of evidence informed parenting classes and TDM Navigators to assist families to fully participate in TDM meetings by providing linkages to supportive services, expediting substance use assessment and treatments services, and providing needed trauma-informed, culturally informed, recovery-focused parent skills and peer coaching support.

TARGET POPULATION: The target population for these interventions is Alaska Native and American Indian children and youth in Anchorage who experience or are at risk of out-of-home placement in which caregiver substance use is a factor.

PROJECTED NUMBERS SERVED: The project provides services to 70 parents and family members, from 40 discrete families, per year.

MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS

- GOAL 1:** Improve well-being and reduce re-traumatizing experiences among children and youth removed from their homes or at risk of out-of-home placement related to caregiver substance use.
- GOAL 2:** Increase knowledge about, and capacity to engage meaningfully in, child welfare TDM processes among the parents and families of children and youth removed from their homes or at risk of out-of-home placement related to family substance use.
- GOAL 3:** Support parenting skill development, recovery from SUD, and connection to needed resources and social supports among the parents and families of children and youth removed from their homes or at risk of out-of-home placement related to family substance use.

KEY PROGRAM SERVICES

- Team Decision Making
- Nurturing Parenting for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery
- Peer Recovery Coaching
- Team Decision Making Navigators
- Delivery and development of culturally appropriate services

PARTNER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Office of Children's Services
- James Bell Associates, Inc.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) local evaluation will have an impact study, a process study, and a collaboration study. The grantee is also participating in the RPG cross-site evaluation studies of family and child outcomes, program implementation, and collaboration among RPG grantees and partners.

IMPACT STUDY DESIGN

The grantee will use a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of its RPG services. Members of both the program and comparison groups will come from the pool of families receiving the TDM model. Members of the comparison group will receive the existing, standard TDM model. Members of the program group will receive an enhanced version of TDM—the Team Decision Making Enhancements for Strong Native Families (TESNF)—which adds to TDM a family navigator and evidence-informed parenting classes for up to 15 months. In the program group, the family navigator will help support the family through pre- and post-TDM meetings to increase engagement in the process, provide support during child placement changes and reunification, and help the family navigate referrals and service linkages. The impact study will include up to 320 families, with 160 in the program group and 160 in the comparison group. The grantee will examine impacts in the following domains: permanency, safety, and child well-being. The grantee will also examine how outcomes change for families in the program group over the course of their time in the RPG program in two additional domains: family functioning and recovery.

Data sources include administrative data (for both the program and comparison groups) and information collected by data collectors using standardized instruments (for only the program group). Evaluation staff will collect data from the program group, including participant surveys, routine assessments, parenting and substance use scales, a pre-post-tests of participant resiliency factors and change readiness, and other standardized instruments. Data will be collected three times for each family: (1) when they begin services (baseline); (2) 6 months following baseline, when families will likely have completed the parenting course sequences; and (3) 15 months following baseline (the end of services for the program group). The impact evaluation will rely only on administrative data.

PROCESS AND COLLABORATION STUDY DESIGN

In the process and collaboration study, the grantee will examine elements of the project's implementation that might influence the study outcomes, whether project milestones were met, and barriers and challenges to program implementation. Specifically, the study will address what services are provided by the program and the quality of those services; who the program participants are; the extent to which the grantee collaborates with key program and community partners; and the barriers and facilitators to implementation of the enhanced TDM intervention. Components of the study will focus on specific aspects of the program logic model such as target population, fidelity to or changes in service delivery model, dosage, intensity, access, partnerships, and external context, including the social climate. Data sources include program documents, administrative data, staff interviews and surveys, case-level program operations data, and participant surveys.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The partners anticipate that TESNF will produce outcomes worthy of continuation within the period of federal funding, and their sustainability will be possible when combined with ongoing data collection and review practices to demonstrate efficacy. The partners have an informed belief that sufficient resources to sustain the project's essential activities exist and will be available following the sixty months of grant services implementation, evaluation, and study. The project budget includes long-term investments, including development of both agencies' Management Information Systems (MIS) in alignment with outcomes that support ongoing services. Further, if and when the project proves efficacious, sharing of outcomes and opportunities to tribal governments and providers around Alaska through the dissemination plan will support understanding and potential interest, with an anticipated interest from some tribal entities in piloting a similar approach in other regions and communities.

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